



WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. (currently amended) A trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield comprising:

two spaced apart trench shield walls, a plurality of support rods attaching between the two spaced apart trench shield walls to hold them apart and forming a working space between the two trench shield walls,

two approximately parallel front legs for removably engaging an inwardly facing surface of one a first trench shield wall, spaced apart main rungs extending between the two legs,

a top platform attached approximately perpendicular to upper ends of said legs for engaging said first trench shield wall, hand rails extending over the platform,

at least one rear leg attached approximately perpendicular to said top platform and approximately parallel to said front legs for engaging an opposite outwardly facing surface of said first trench shield wall, said hand rails being continuous with both said front and said rear legs, and

each of said front legs and each of said rear legs being rigidly secured relative to said platform.

2. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 1 further comprising:

stand off arms provided on the front legs to removably engage an inwardly facing surface of said first trench shield wall to hold the main rungs of the ladder away from the first trench shield wall while still allowing the ladder to be moved relative to the first trench shield wall.

3. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 1 wherein the front legs are spaced apart from said at least one rear leg a sufficient distance to allow the front and rear legs to receive trench shield walls of varying thicknesses.

4. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 1 further comprising:

an extension portion removably added to the bottom of the front legs, said extension portion having two extension legs with hooks at the upper end of each extension leg for removably hanging the extension portion on the

main rungs, and spaced apart extension rungs extending between the extension legs.

5. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 4 further comprising:

stand off arms provided on the extension legs to removably engage an inwardly facing surface of the first trench shield wall to hold the extension rungs away from the first trench shield wall while still allowing the ladder to be moved relative to the first trench shield wall.

6. A trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield comprising:

two spaced apart trench shield walls, a plurality of support rods attaching between the two spaced apart trench shield walls to hold them apart and forming a working space between the two trench shield walls,

a front ladder with two front legs, spaced apart main rungs extending approximately perpendicular to and between said front legs, a top platform attached approximately perpendicular to said front ladder at an upper end of said front ladder, and at least one rear leg attached approximately perpendicular to said top platform and approximately parallel to said front

legs and spaced apart from said front legs, hand rails being continuous with both said front and said rear legs, and

each of said front legs and each of said rear legs being rigidly secured relative to said platform.

7. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 6 further comprising:

at least one hand rail attached to said platform and extending over the platform.

8. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 6 further comprising:

stand off arms provided on the front legs and extending toward the at least one rear leg to removably engage an inwardly facing surface of ~~one~~ a first trench shield wall in order to hold the main rungs of the front ladder away from the first trench shield wall while still allowing the ladder to be moved relative to the first trench shield wall.

9. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 6 wherein the front

legs are spaced apart from said at least one rear leg a sufficient distance to allow trench shield walls of varying thicknesses to be removably inserted between the front and rear legs.

10. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 6 further comprising:

an extension portion removably added to the bottom of the front legs, said extension portion having two extension legs with hooks at the upper end of each extension leg for removably hanging the extension portion on the main rungs, spaced apart extension rungs extending between the extension legs.

11. (currently amended) A The trench shield ladder in combination with a trench shield according to Claim 10 further comprising:

rearwardly extending stand off arms provided on the front legs and the extension legs to removably engage an inwardly facing surface of ~~one~~ the first trench shield wall in order to hold the main rungs and the extension rungs away from the first trench shield wall while still allowing the ladder to be moved relative to the first trench shield wall.